

# Lesson 1 Enrich Your Life

## The Magic of Morning Pages

Welcome to my channel Good Habits! This is Regan, your podcast host. Today, I'm going to talk about a way of starting the day that many people, including me, find enormously useful. It's a kind of journaling called "the morning pages." There is no age at which it is too late to form this habit. I started eight years ago as a high school student, and that's why today's episode is especially for my teenage subscribers.

The morning pages are three pages of "free writing," ideally done first thing in the morning. The concept is simple. Get up every morning, pick up a pen and a notebook, and write whatever crosses your mind until you have filled three pages. The technique was originally developed to help writers and artists overcome a loss of creativity, but anybody can use it to create a better life.

There is no right or wrong way to write your morning pages, but there are two rules. First, don't judge your writing as good or bad. These pages are meant to be a "brain cleansing," so don't worry about writing correctly. Second, keep your writing completely private. It is important for you to write freely and honestly. You're even advised not to read your writing yourself for weeks.

Now, let me share the experiences of some people I interviewed. David, a chef and kitchen manager, who has been writing morning pages for two years, says:

My job tends to be very stressful. When I started writing morning pages, I just wrote a lot of complaints about my hard life. Later, I began to ask questions, like "What would make my life easier today?" "How can I improve my recipes?" Sometimes, I keep asking questions until I reach a sort of "click moment." It feels like a door opening to great ideas. Nowadays, I feel less stressed, enjoy my job more, and am more productive.

Now, let's listen to Yuna, a high school junior:

When I started this exercise last year, I simply wrote random thoughts like this:

I'm sleepy. A slight headache's starting.

I need to finish the math assignment today ...

I don't know what more to write now.

But soon I found I had deeper and deeper thoughts. Now, I normally start by writing about today's tasks or worries. After that, I write about my dreams and how to move towards them. I often come up with great plans and a clear sense of purpose to start the day. Most importantly, I'm much happier than before.

I can totally relate to these two people because their experiences are similar to mine. Like Yuna, I started this journaling during my first year of high school. At that time, I felt lost, stressed, and unsure about the future, and it wasn't easy for me to concentrate. When I first tried writing three daily pages, I didn't expect to stick to it. But I did, and it changed my life!

Releasing my feelings onto paper every morning helped relieve my emotional tension. I gained more inner peace, which improved my schoolwork performance. Like David, I asked many questions, for instance, "Why was I so angry yesterday?" "Why are things less fun these days?" Then, I started raising more challenging ones: "What could make me happier right now?" "What is my ideal future? Can I reach it? How?"

Answering these questions showed me what kind of person I was and what my needs, values, passions, and talents were. More importantly, I came to know what I truly wanted! I remembered my childhood dreams of being a writer, songwriter, and radio host. Gradually, vague ideas became clear plans. Years later, here I am, a successful podcaster and vlogger! I've also published a book and a music album. My morning pages, which I still write every day, have given me the drive and ideas to achieve these aims.

Dear subscribers, will you try writing your morning pages, too? You never know what creative energy or ideas you have until you start exploring. Don't be a perfectionist, though. If you miss a few days, simply open your notebook and start again! The ultimate aim is to improve your mental health and help you lead a happier, more creative life.

## Further Reading

### Tips for Making a Habit Stick

Forming a new habit is not easy, especially in the beginning. Here are five ways to start a habit that really sticks. First, start small. Don't try to do too much, too quickly. A habit is formed through repetition, so make the change easier to repeat. Second, make your goal specific. Don't say, "I'll meditate regularly." Say, "I'll meditate for five minutes each day." This works even better if you combine your new habit with an existing one, for example, "After brushing my teeth in the morning, I'll meditate for five minutes." When your fixed habit becomes a cue for action, your new habit is more likely to stick. Third, make it attractive. Pair your new change with what you love. You could listen to your favorite piece of calming music while meditating. Fourth, track your progress. Mark a calendar with an X every time you finish something. Seeing the progress gives you a sense of achievement and helps you keep going. Fifth, be flexible. Forming a new habit takes time. If you find that your progress has stopped for any reason, just pick up where you left off.